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S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 03 KHARTOUM 000384

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DEPARTMENT FOR AF A/S FRAZER AND AF/SPG
NSC FOR PITTMAN AND SHORTLEY
ADDIS ABABA ALSO FOR USAU

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TAGS: [PREF](#) [PGOV](#) [KPKO](#) [PTER](#) [AU](#) [UN](#) [SU](#) [US](#) [CD](#) [LY](#)
SUBJECT: SE NATSIOS MEETING WITH FM LAM AKOL

REF: A. NDJAMENA 00070

[1](#)B. 06 KHARTOUM 02874

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Classified By: DCM Roberto Powers, Reason: Sections 1.4 (b) and (d)

[1](#)1. (C) Summary: In a March 7 meeting with Foreign Minister Lam Akol, SE Natsios described the USG's frustration at the delay in implementation of the November Addis Ababa and Abuja agreements, called on Sudan to provide an immediate response to the UNSYG's January 24 letter on the Heavy Support Package, and asked that President Bashir issue a letter to target countries to encourage troop contributions for phase two and phase three. Akol responded that Sudan remained committed to the agreements and would reply to the UNSYG's letter in the near future. He denied that Sudan had taken actions to discourage troop contributions. On the political process, SE Natsios acknowledged that some regional governments and non-signatories were hindering peace efforts. He urged the Sudanese Government to proceed with the formation of the Transitional Darfur Regional Authority in consultation with Senior Assistant to the President and Sudan Liberation Movement (SLM) leader Minni Minawi and to empower First Vice President Salva Kiir to engage with the non-signatories.

[1](#)2. Summary continued: SE Natsios noted that an interruption in humanitarian services in Darfur would have severe consequences for the bilateral relationship and underscored the importance of removing bureaucratic obstacles to aid operations. He also said that Sudan should discipline the perpetrators of the January attack on humanitarian workers in Nyala. Akol said Sudan was already working to address the bureaucratic issues and said that the judicial branch would handle the investigation of the security services in Nyala. With regard to Southern Sudan, SE Natsios asked for an acceleration of the border commission process for Abyei and rapid disarmament of the militias, which Akol said he was pushing. SE Natsios also requested that Sudan release the containers for the New Embassy Compound to avoid a deterioration in relations, and Akol promised to raise the issue with the Minister of Finance. Akol asked about the status of the Sudanese detainees in Guantanamo Bay and of his December letter to the Secretary. SE Natsios explained that he was addressing the issue at the highest levels of the USG.
End summary.

Peace-Keeping

13. (C) SE Natsios explained "our perception is that you're not committed to Addis." He said that the international community had negotiated the November 16 Addis Ababa agreement in response to Sudan's rejection of UN Security Council Resolution 1706. The USG had then pushed for a Presidential Statement (PRST) in the UN Security Council at Sudan's behest. Now, Sudan was attempting to re-write the command and control structures of the agreement. SE Natsios accused President Bashir of discouraging troop contributing countries (TCCs) from supporting the Heavy Support Package and the UN/AU hybrid force, pointing to a December letter from Sudan's mission in New York and a phone call from Bashir to another Arab leader as examples of Sudan urging countries not to contribute. He called on President Bashir to write a letter to TCCs asking for contributions to demonstrate Sudan's continued commitment to the Addis Ababa and Abuja agreements.

14. (C) Akol responded that Sudan had agreed to phase one of the Addis Ababa agreement and that the delay in its implementation was on the "UN side." He confirmed that Bashir's understanding of the concepts in the Addis Ababa and Abuja agreements matched that of the international community. "Andrew, it took a long time to arrive where we are," said Akol. "No one in the Sudanese government wants to back track." Akol claimed that the response to UNSYG Ban Ki-moon's January 24 letter on the Heavy Support Package was awaiting Bashir's signature and that Sudan hoped to finalize agreement on phase two before the completion of phase one. He asserted that phase three was an aggregate of the previous two phases and that it was not a new package, "just adding more troops to phase two." He denied that Sudan was renegotiating the command and control structure and that it wanted to abide by the Addis Ababa agreement, which stated that an African commander would be appointed by the AU in consultation with the UN. "When you talk to Nafie, Nafie is

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thinking of the commander," said Akol, referring to Presidential Advisor Nafie Ali Nafie's objections to UN command and control.

15. (C) Akol denied that President Bashir had discouraged troop contributions to phase two. He also said that the letter issued by Sudan's mission in New York had been revoked and that Sudan's Permanent Representative to the UN had been disciplined for circulating it. Akol was quick to say that it was "not the business of Bashir to curry contributions for the UN."

Political Process and the Non-Signatories

16. (S/NF) SE Natsios described his trip to Chad in January, where he had met with non-signatory leaders (Ref A). He said he had urged the non-signatories to renounce violent regime change in Khartoum and to develop realistic political goals to address the Darfur conflict. He acknowledged that many non-signatories were hindering the political process and said that the USG would sanction at least one rebel leader in the near future. SE Natsios re-iterated the USG's support for a single negotiating track with the non-signatories, coordinated by the UN and AU. Referring to SE Natsios' upcoming trip to Tripoli, Akol asked him to tell President Qadafi that his efforts to unify the non-signatories were helpful but that Libya needed to follow the UN/AU lead stipulated in the November 16 Addis Ababa agreement. SE Natsios noted that the Sudanese People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) had indicated a willingness to engage with the non-signatories as well and urged the Sudanese government to empower Kiir to do so. Akol denied that the Sudanese government had discouraged Kiir from engaging with the non-signatories, contrary to SPLM claims.

¶7. (C) SE Natsios criticized the Sudanese government for not implementing the Transitional Darfur Regional Authority (TDRA) in consultation with Minawi and urged the Government to change course in order to demonstrate the value of the agreement to the non-signatories. He also suggested that the Sudanese government consider allowing the release of former Sudan Liberation Movement (SLM) Humanitarian Affairs Coordinator Suleiman Jamoos from a UN field hospital in Kadugli, South Kordofan in order to change the political dynamic on the ground. Akol responded that Jamoos "is a not a government problem, he's Minni's problem" (Ref B).

Humanitarian Operations

¶8. (C) Addressing the growing obstacles for humanitarian operations in Darfur, SE Natsios said that "if the INGOs leave, it will cause a deterioration in our relationship." He told Akol that Sudan should not confuse advocacy organizations with operational NGOs, which were a moderating influence in the U.S. While noting that rebel groups had caused most of the recent violence against INGOs, SE Natsios stated that the bureaucratic obstacles to humanitarian operations had increased in 2006. "The appearance is that a decision was made at the senior level to obstruct their activities," he said. He called on the Sudanese government to release INGOs' assets from customs, waive the fees associated with their operations in Sudan, fast-track visa applications for humanitarian workers, and implement the moratorium on permits until January 31, 2008. He also said that the Government should drop the charges against the humanitarian workers who were arrested in Nyala in January and investigate the members of the local security services that attacked them following the arrest.

¶9. (C) Akol promised that the Sudanese government would "handle" the four specific concerns that SE Natsios had raised. He said that he had told Medecins Sans Frontieres representatives on March 6 that they could obtain multiple entry visas "as long as they want," implying that this would extend to other humanitarian organizations. Regarding the Nyala incident, he said the Ministry of Justice had been asked to "quash" the case against the INGOs workers, which it had done. He said that the investigation of the local security services would be handled by the judicial branch, which was independent from the executive, and emphasized that the attack had not been directed by the central government.

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Southern Sudan

¶10. (C) SE Natsios said that Sudan must accelerate the border commission process for Abyei in order to lay the foundation for elections in 2009. He also called for more rapid demobilization of militias in Southern Sudan. Akol said that there had been three possible approaches to the Abyei issue: 1) Recall the Abyei Border Commission (ABC), 2) Settle it through a judicial process, and 3) Settle through a political process. He said that the ABC had chosen the third approach, a decision that should be binding. The Presidency had met on March 5 to discuss Abyei, though Akol did not disclose the results of their discussion. He concurred with SE Natsios that militia demobilization was critical and said that the December incident in Malakal was an "eye opener." "We're pushing it," said Akol, noting that he had a vested interest in the issue based on his familial ties to the Malakal area.

Bilateral Relationship

¶11. (C) SE Natsios emphasized that the USG wanted to improve bilateral relations with Sudan. For this reason, he had engaged with non-signatory leaders in Chad and had pushed for the PRST in the UN Security Council. He said that if relations deteriorated further, the possibility of a normalization of relations and the removal of Sudan from the list of state sponsors of terror would become more remote. He said that the New Embassy Compound project was facing an administrative deadline in Washington that would force its cancellation if Sudan did not release the construction containers. Akol said that it was "essential" to have a U.S. Embassy in Sudan and that the Sudanese government had always insisted on a U.S. presence--as a prerequisite to normalizing relations. "As far as a political decision is concerned, everyone is convinced it's better to have a U.S. Embassy here." He claimed that the delay was caused by the Minister of Finance, who was alleging that the duty-free status for embassy construction materials was not authorized under the "Geneva Convention." CDA Powers handed Akol a copy of the Vienna Convention, and the Foreign Minister promised to raise this issue with the Minister of Finance.

¶12. (C) Though SE Natsios said he was working to facilitate the repatriation of two Sudanese nationals from the USG detention facility in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, Akol asked about the status of his December letter to the Secretary on the issue. SE Natsios re-iterated that he, A/S Frazer, and CDA Hume agreed that "enough is enough" and were raising the issue at the highest levels of the Department. Akol explained that the Sudanese Government faced public criticism for not doing enough on the detainee issue. Concluding, he thanked Natsios for his openness throughout their meeting. "It takes courage to say what you're saying," stated Akol. "I saw the atmosphere in Washington last fall." Akol said that he too faced domestic challenges and was "walking a tight rope." He said that people in both Sudan and the U.S. saw each other as the "devil incarnate," when the truth was in between. "Our success is being frank with each other," said Akol.

¶13. (U) SE Natsios cleared this message.

¶14. (U) Tripoli minimize considered.
HUME